

Mr. Edwin A. Thompson
Director, Records Declassification Division
National Archives and Records Service
Room 18-W, National Archives Building
Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Alan:

On February 25th, 1981, you passed to us several examples of Foreign Service despatches originated by the Office of Field Coordination (OFC) in Frankfurt, West Germany in 1953 and all related to the U.S. Escapee Program. You accompanied the material with three questions:

- a. Is this material declassifiable?
- b. What is the affiliation of OFC?
- c. What should the policy be on release of escapee information?

After studying the material and doing some research on the U.S. Escapee Program, we found that the Program was activated by the Department of State in April 1952. State therefore had the primary role but many other U.S. agencies, including CIA, played important roles in the Escapee Program. The records relating to the Escapee Program will undoubtedly come from many U.S. agencies and include information of interest to them. From the sampling of documents you passed to us we would answer your questions as follows:

- a. We found no information of CIA interest in any of these documents therefore they are declassifiable from the CIA point of view.
- b. OFC was a creature of the Department of State.
- c. Policy on the release of information relating to the Escapee Program should be determined primarily by the Department of State and coordinated with ^{the} other agencies involved. In this regard CIA has some equities related to the Program which we would want to protect ~~as necessary~~ and would have a definite interest in the formulation of such a policy. These equities, at a minimum, will concern the following areas:
 - 1) Foreign liaison relationships.
 - 2) Counterintelligence activities as part of the screening process aimed at ferreting out enemy agents.
 - 3) Spotting, debriefing, and exploiting certain higher level escapees who qualified as defectors.

SECRET (When Filled In)

AREA OR COUNTRY(S)	ORGANIZATIONS	FUNCTIONS & TOPICS	PERSONALITIES	DOCUMENT
HQ	DDP	Liaison (interagency)		DATE:
	DDI	Escapee program		28 Mar
	MSA	Kersten amendment		1953
	PSB			
	State			
IDENTIFICATION OF DOCUMENT (author, form, addressee, title & length)				CLASS.: S
Memo from Richard Helms, A/DDP to DDI				NO. 1
Subject: Elimination of Escapee Program, MSA Funds.				DDP
				3024
				LOCATION:
				HS/CSG-
				2303/24 1

ABSTRACT

Escapee program was activated by State Department in April 1952 pursuant to recommendation by PSB. Funds were obtained from MSA "defense" money for Iron Curtain escapees under the Kersten Amendment (section 101 (a) Mutual Security Act, 1951) Budget for just year was \$4.3 million in Kersten funds and \$2 in counterpart money. Replying to DDI memo (TS 76029) cites advantages to DDP of program and opposes its elimination.

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